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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 1105
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RUEHXS/ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM COLLECTIVE
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SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREF](#) [VM](#) [CB](#)

SUBJECT: CENTRAL HIGHLANDS: UNHCR TO VISIT MARCH 22; UNHCR
ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER MAY VISIT VIETNAM IN APRIL/MAY

Ref: A) Hanoi 188; B) 98; C) HCMC 53; D) HCMC 72

¶1. (SBU) Summary: A UNHCR team will visit Gia Lai Province March 22-23 to meet with the families of "double-backers." The team has also requested private meetings with two individuals who were allegedly mistreated by local authorities. The GVN has invited Assistant High Commissioner Erika Feller to visit Vietnam -- and the Central Highlands -- in the April/May timeframe, but timing may be a problem. End Summary.

Visit to Gia Lai

¶2. (SBU) UNHCR Vietnam Chief of Mission Vu Anh Son told Pol/C March 14 that he and Policy Officer Giuseppe de Vincentis will visit Gia Lai Province March 22-23 to meet with returnees and their families. At the top of their list are the families of the three "double-backers" -- returnees who again crossed into Cambodia -- who have figured prominently in recent correspondence between UNHCR and Human Rights Watch. According to Son, UNHCR has met with the three in Phnom Penh, but "cannot share its report from the meeting because it is confidential."

¶3. (SBU) Son and de Vincentis have also requested private meetings with two individuals who have allegedly been mistreated by local authorities. (Note: These individuals are MTN-406 Siu Nham, M, 1981, and MTN-277 Kpa Bo, M, 1979. Both returned involuntarily on July 20, 2005. End Note.) "Meeting in private with returnees is no longer a problem for UNHCR," Son said. In addition to meeting returnees, the UNHCR team will look into the USG-funded microprojects in Ia Grai District. After he returns to Hanoi, Son tentatively plans to brief local diplomatic representatives on March 27.

Senior UNHCR Visit to Vietnam?

¶4. (SBU) Son also said that the GVN extended an invitation to Assistant High Commissioner (Protection) Erika Feller to visit Vietnam in the April/May timeframe. The purpose of the visit would be to commemorate one year (more or less) of successful Tripartite MOU implementation (which Feller negotiated for UNHCR). She would also take the opportunity to visit the Central Highlands, Son said. However, timing may be problematic: mid-April works best for her because of other commitments in Nepal and India, but the GVN is waving her off at that time "because of Party Congress considerations," Son said. Sometime in early May may work better, he surmised.

Comment

15. (SBU) Another possible explanation for GVN reluctance to have the Assistant High Commissioner visit Vietnam, and the Central Highlands, in mid-April is that Easter falls on April 16. If past years are any guide, the Central Highlands may be under close supervision at that time.

MARINE